

VITAL SPEECHES

— OF THE DAY —

VOLUME VI
NUMBER 20

AUGUST 1, 1940

TWICE A MONTH
\$3.00 A YEAR

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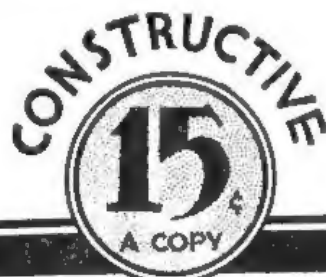
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My Last Appeal to Great Britain

A GREAT EMPIRE WILL BE DESTROYED

By ADOLF HITLER, *Chancellor of Germany*

Speech made to the Reichstag, July 19, 1940

MEMBERS of the Reichstag: I have summoned you to this meeting in the midst of our tremendous struggle for the freedom and the future of the German nation.

I have done so, first because I consider it necessary to give our own people an insight into events in history that lie behind us; secondly, because I wish to express my gratitude to our magnificent soldiers, and third, with the intention of appealing once more and for the last time to common sense in general.

If we compare the causes that prompted this historic struggle and the magnitude of the far-reaching effects, we are forced to the conclusion that its general course and the sacrifices it has entailed are out of all proportion to the alleged reasons for its outbreak unless they were nothing but a pretext underlying the intentions.

The program of the National Socialist movement, in so far as it affected the future development of Germany's relations with the rest of the world, was simply an effort to effect revision of the Treaty of Versailles, and, so far as possible, this was to be brought about by peaceful means. This revision was absolutely essential.

The conditions imposed at Versailles were intolerable, not only because of the humiliating discrimination, which deprived the German nation of all its rights, but even more because of the resultant destruction of the material existence of one of the great civilized nations of the world and the proposed destruction of its future, the completely senseless gathering of immense tracts of territory under the domination of a few States, and the theft of all the irrevocable foundations of life and indispensable, vital factors from a conquered nation.

Even while this treaty was being drafted men of insight, even among our enemies, were uttering warnings about the terrible consequences the ruthless application of these insane conditions would entail, proof that even among them the conviction predominated that such a dictate could not possibly be upheld in days to come.

Their objections and protests were silenced by the assurance that the statutes of the newly created League of Nations provided for the revision of these conditions. In fact, the League was supposed to be the competent authority. The hope of revision was at no time regarded as presumptuous but as something natural.

Unfortunately, the Geneva institution, as those responsible at Versailles intended, never viewed itself as competent to undertake any sensible revision but from the very outset was nothing more than the guarantor of the ruthless enforcement and maintenance of conditions imposed at Versailles.

All attempts made by democratic Germany to obtain equality for the German people by a revision of the treaty proved unavailing. It is always in the interests of the conqueror to present stipulations that are to his advantage as sacred, while the instinct of self-preservation in the vanquished leads him to acquire the common human rights that he has lost.

For him, the dictate of an overbearing conqueror has all the less legal force since he never has been honorably conquered.

Owing to a rare misfortune the German Empire between 1914 and 1918 did not have good leadership. To this, and to the as yet unenlightened faith and trust placed by the German people in the words of democratic statesmen, our downfall was due.

Hence, the Anglo-French claim that the dictate of Versailles was a sort of international supreme code of laws appeared to be nothing more than a piece of insupportable arrogance to every honest German. The assumption, however, that British or French statesmen should actually claim to be the guardians of justice, and even of human culture, is mere stupid effrontery, a piece of effrontery that is thrown into a sufficiently glaring light by their own extremely negligible achievements in this direction.

Seldom had any nations in the world been ruled with a lesser degree of wisdom, morality and culture than those presently exposed to the predilections of certain democratic statesmen.

The program of the National Socialist movement, besides freeing the Reich from the innermost fetters of a small substratum of Jewish, capitalistic and pluto-democratic profiteers, proclaimed to the world our resolution to shake off the shackles of the Versailles Treaty.

Germany's demand for this revision was a vital necessity and essential to the existence and honor of every great nation, and it probably will one day be regarded by posterity as extremely reasonable.

In practice, all of these demands had to be carried through contrary to the will of the Franco-British rulers. We all regarded it as a sure sign of successful leadership in the Third Reich that for years we were able to bring about this revision without a war, not that, as the British and French demagogues asserted, we were at that time incapable of fighting.

When, thanks to growing common sense, it appeared as though international cooperation might lead to a peaceful solution of remaining problems, the agreement to this end, signed in Munich Sept. 29, 1938, by the four leading interested powers was not only not welcome in London and Paris, but was actually condemned as a sign of abominable weakness.

Now that peaceful revision seemed threatened to be crowned with success the Jewish capitalist war-mongers, their hands stained with blood, saw their tangible pretext for realizing their diabolical plans vanish into thin air.

Once again we witness a conspiracy of wretched corruptible political creatures and money-grabbing financial magnates for whom war was a welcome means for furthering their aims.

The poison scattered by the Jews throughout the countries began to exercise its disintegrating influence on sound common sense. Scribblers concentrated on decrying honest men who wanted peace as weaklings and traitors and upon denouncing the opposition parties as the fifth column, thus breaking all internal resistance to their criminal war policy.

Jews and Free Masons, armament manufacturers and war profiteers, international business men and stock exchange jugglers seized upon political hirelings of the desperado type who described war as something infinitely desirable. It was

through the work of these criminal persons that the Polish State was spurred to adopt an attitude that was out of all proportion to Germany's demands, still less with the attendant consequences.

For in Poland pre-eminently the German Reich has exercised genuine self-restraint since the National Socialist regime came into power.

One of the most foolish measures of the Versailles dictate, namely, the severance of an old German province from the Reich, was crying aloud for revision, yet what were my requests?

I name myself in this connection because no other statesman might have dared to suggest a solution like mine to the German nation. It merely required the return of Danzig, an ancient German city, to the Reich and the creation of a means of communication between the Reich and its severed province.

Even this was to be decided by a plebiscite subject to the control of an international body.

Had Mr. Churchill and the other warmongers felt a fraction of the responsibility toward Europe that inspired me they could not have started their infamous game.

It was only due to the machinations of these and other European and non-European powers that Poland rejected my proposals, which in no way affected her honor or existence, and in their stead resorted to a course entailing terror and destruction.

In this case we once more showed unprecedented and truly superhuman self-control. For months, despite many attacks on minority Germans and despite the slaughter of tens of thousands of our German fellow-countrymen, we still sought understanding by peaceful means.

What was the situation? One of the most unnatural creations of the dictate of Versailles, puffed up with political and military pomp, insulted another State and threatened to grind it to powder, to fight battles on the outskirts of Berlin, to hack the German armies to pieces, to extend its frontiers to the Elbe, and so forth.

Meanwhile Germany watched this tumult in patient silence, although a single movement of her armed forces would have sufficed to prick this bubble inflated with hatred.

On Sept. 2 the conflict might still have been averted. Mussolini proposed a plan for the immediate cessation of all hostilities and for peaceful negotiation.

Though Germany saw her armies storming to victory, I nevertheless accepted this proposal. It was only the Anglo-French warmongers who desired war and not peace. More than that, Mr. Chamberlain said they needed a long war because they had now invested their capital in armament shares, had purchased machinery for the development of their business interests and needed time for amortization of their investments. For, after all, what do these international citizens care about Poles, Czechs or such peoples?

On June 19, 1940, a German soldier found a curious document when searching some railway trucks in a railway station. As the document bore a distinctive inscription, he immediately handed it to his superior officer. It was in turn passed to other quarters where it was quickly realized that we had happened on an important discovery.

The State was subjected to more thorough search. Thus it was that the German High Command got possession of a group of documents of unique historical significance. They were the secret records of the Allied Supreme War Council and included the minutes of every meeting held by this illustrious body.

This time Mr. Churchill will not be successful in contesting or lying about the veracity of these documents as he

tried to do when documents were discovered in Warsaw. These documents bear marginal notes inscribed by Messrs. Daladier, Weygand and others, which can at any time be affirmed or refuted by these gentlemen.

They show that those totally hardhearted politicians regard all the small nations as a means to their ends, that they had attempted to use Finland to their own interests, that they had determined to turn Norway and Sweden into a theatre of war, that they had planned to fan a conflagration in the Balkans in order to gain the assistance of the 100 divisions from those countries, that there was a ruthless and unscrupulous interpretation of the neutrality of Turkey, who was not unfavorable to them, and that they had inveigled Belgium and the Netherlands more and more completely until they had finally entrapped them into binding agreements.

The documents further give a picture of the methods by which these political warmongers tried to quench the blaze they had lighted in their democratic blitzkriegism, which is in part to blame for the appalling fate they have inflicted on hundreds of thousands and even millions of their own soldiers, the barbarous and unscrupulous fate they caused to have visited on their peoples, which brought them no military advantages although the effects on the population were outrageously cruel.

These same criminals are responsible for having driven Poland into war.

On Oct. 6, 1939, at this very place, I addressed the German nation for the second time during this war. I was able to inform them of our glorious military victory over the Polish State. At the same time I appealed to these men and to the nations themselves.

I warned them not to continue this war, the consequences of which could only be devastating. I particularly warned the French against embarking on a war that would forcibly eat its way across the frontier and, irrespective of its outcome, would have appalling consequences.

At the same time I addressed an appeal to the rest of the world, although I feared, as I expressly stated, that my words would not be heard, that it would more than ever arouse the fury of the warmongers. Everything happened as I predicted. Responsible elements in France resented my appeal as a dangerous attack on their war profits.

They, therefore, immediately began to declare that suppressing the conflagration was out of the question; nay, that it was even a crime to oppose the war that had to be pursued in the name of civilization, humanity, happiness, progress and, to leave no stone unturned, in the name of religion itself. For this purpose even the colonials were to be mobilized.

Victory, though, could have been easily achieved. It was within easy reach, as I myself have known for a long time since, else I should not have broadcast my appeal for peace throughout the world.

For, if I had not had any justification for believing in peace I should never have proposed an understanding with Britain and France about making any demands, but in a very few days these agitators had succeeded in representing me to the rest of the world as a veritable coward.

For these proposals of mine I was abused and personally insulted. Mr. Chamberlain spat upon me before the eyes of the world and following the instructions of the instigators and warmongers in the background, men such as Churchill, Cooper, Eden—Britons and others—declined even to mention peace, let alone work for it. Thus this ultra-capitalistic collection of people with a personal interest in the war clamored for its continuation. This is now taking place.

I have already assured you, my friends, though, that if a

long time elapses without my making a statement, or if things appear to be quiet, this does not mean that I am doing nothing.

It is not necessary with us, as it is in the democracies, to multiply every airplane that is built by five or by twelve and then broadcast it to the world. Even for a hen, it is not very clever to announce in a loud voice every egg she is about to lay.

However, it is much more stupid for statesmen to babble to the world of projects they have in mind, thereby informing the world in good time. Thanks to the excited babbling of two of these great democratic statesmen, we have been kept informed as to our enemy's plans for extending the war and their concentration on Norway and Sweden.

While the Anglo-French clique was looking around to find new possibilities of extending the war, or roping in new victims, I was working to complete the reorganization of the German forces, to form new units to accelerate production of war material and to complete the training of the entire naval, military and air forces for their new tasks. Apart from that, the bad weather in the late Autumn and in the Winter made necessary a postponement of our military operations.

During the month of March, however, we received information concerning the Anglo-French plans for intervening in the Russo-Finnish conflict, presumably not so much for the sake of helping the Finns as to damage Russia, which was regarded as a power working with Germany. These intentions developed into a decision to take an active part, if possible, in the war in Finland in order to obtain a base for carrying the war into the Baltic.

At the same time, however, a proposal of the Allied Supreme War Council became more and more insistent either to inflame the Balkans and Asia Minor, in order to cut off Germany's supply of oil from Russia, or to get possession of the Swedish iron ore. With this object in view, a landing was planned in Norway with the primary object of occupying the iron ore railway from Narvik across Sweden to the port of Lulea.

The conclusion of peace between Russia and Finland caused the contemplated action in the north to be withheld at the last minute, but a few days later those intentions again became more definite as final decisions were reached.

Britain and France had agreed to carry out an immediate occupation of a number of the most important ports in Norway on the pretext of preventing Germany from benefiting from additional supplies of Swedish ore. In order to get this Swedish ore, they intended to go into Sweden and to deal with the small forces which Sweden could assemble, if possible in a friendly way but with force if necessary.

We learned of this from the uncontrollable gossip of no less a dignitary than the First Lord of the Admiralty. We received further confirmation by a hint given by the French Premier to a foreign diplomat. Until a short time ago, however, we did not know that the date for this action had been postponed twice before April 8. The occupation was to have taken place on the 8th, this being the third and final date.

In fact, this was not confirmed definitely until the finding of the Allied Supreme War Council records. As soon as the danger of the northern States being pulled into the war became apparent, I gave the necessary orders to the German forces.

The case of the Altmark showed at the time that the Norwegian Government was not prepared to safeguard its neutrality. Reports from observers made it clear that leaders of the Norwegian Government and the Allies were in complete agreement.

Finally the reaction of Norway to the penetration of British mine layers into Norwegian territorial waters dispelled the last shadow of doubt. This was the signal for the beginning of the German operation, which had been prepared in every detail.

The position actually was different from what we believed it to be on April 9, but at that time we believed we had anticipated the British occupation by a few hours. Today we know that the landing of British troops had been planned for the 8th and that the embarkation of British units already had begun on the 5th and 6th.

However, at the same time the first report of the German action, or rather the departure of the German fleet, was received at the British Admiralty, and in view of this fact, Mr. Churchill decided to order the disembarkation of the units which already were on board ship so that the British fleet first could seek out and attack the German vessels.

This failed. Only one British destroyer made contact with German naval vessels, and it was sunk before it could convey any information to the British Admiralty or the British fleet.

This frustrated the landing of the first German detachments on the 9th in an area reaching from Oslo to Narvik. When word of this was received in London, Mr. Churchill already had been waiting anxiously for some hours for word of the successes of his fleet.

This, gentlemen, was the boldest undertaking in the history of the German forces. Its successful execution became possible only through the command and conduct of all German soldiers taking part.

The achievements of our army, navy and air force in this venture in Norway are expressive of the highest military qualities. The navy executed the operations assigned to it, and later on the transport of troops against an enemy possessing tenfold superiority.

All the units of our German navy covered themselves with imperishable glory in this action. Only after the war will it be possible to disclose the difficulties encountered in this campaign, such as setbacks and accidents. We finally overcame all difficulties, thanks to the conduct of the officers and men.

The air force, often the only means of transport and communication in this vast area, surpassed itself. During the attacks on enemy ships and on disembarked troops it could hardly be praised more highly than was the tenacity and courage of the transport pilots who in spite of bad weather kept on flying in the land of the midnight sun in order to land soldiers in blinding snowstorms.

The Norwegian fjords were the graveyards of many British warships. The British fleet finally had to give way before the incessant attacks of German dive bombers. They evacuated those areas of which it had been said with fine taste in a British paper a few weeks earlier that it would be a pleasure for Britain to take up the German challenge.

Regarding the army, great demands were made on the soldiers during transport. Air landing troops provided the first foothold at many places. Division after division followed in a steady stream and began war operations in a region which provided exceptional facilities for resistance on account of its natural characteristics. So far as Norwegian units were concerned, the region was defended very bravely.

As for the British troops landed in Norway, the only thing worth mentioning was the unscrupulousness with which troops so badly equipped and trained and with such sorry leadership were put ashore as an expeditionary force. They were inferior from the very beginning. On the other hand, the achievements of the German infantry, engineers,

artillery and other units will go down in history as a proud example of heroism.

Churchill, Chamberlain and Daladier were until recently very badly informed in regard to the nature of German unity. I announced at the time that the future probably would teach them a lesson, and I may assume that the action of mountain troops from Austria in the most northerly point of our struggle for freedom has given them the necessary information about the Reich and its sons.

It is too bad that Mr. Chamberlain's Grenadier Guards did not devote sufficient and lasting attention to this problem, but chose instead to overlook such matters in making contact with the troops so recently engrossed in the Reich.

General von Falkenhorst was charged with land operations in Norway. Lieut. Gen. Dietl was the hero of Narvik. Naval operations were carried out under the command of the Admiral of the Fleet Saalwaechter, and Admiral Carls and Boehm and Vice Admiral Luetjens.

Air operations were under the command of Col. Gen. Milch, and Lieut. Gen. Geissler. The Army High Command, Col. Gen. Keitel as Commander in Chief and Col. Gen. Joedel as Chief of Staff were responsible for the execution of my instructions for the entire operations.

Before the campaign in Norway had ended, the news from the west became more and more threatening, though actually before the outbreak of war plans had been made to break through the Maginot Line in case of an unavoidable conflict with France and Britain, an undertaking for which they had been equipped with the necessary arms.

The necessity for some action against Belgium, or Holland if need be, soon became evident. Germany at first had concentrated hardly any forces near the borders of Holland and Belgium apart from the troops required for her security. Nevertheless notable concentrations of French forces were being made along the French-Belgian frontier.

A concentration of tank and mechanized divisions in that region indicated the intention or at least the possibility of their being thrown forward in a dash through Belgium to the German frontier. The following facts now have made the matter definite.

To give a fair and proper interpretation of Belgian and Dutch neutrality, both would have had to turn their attention toward the west in view of the concentration of Allied forces on their frontier. But they began instead to reduce their own forces in order to man the German frontier. Simultaneously, news of the general staff conversations then going on threw a peculiar light on Belgian and Dutch neutrality.

I do not need to point out that these conversations would not have been carried on by both sides if they had been merely neutral. In addition, growing signs were pointing to an advance of British and French troops through Holland and Belgium against the German industrial districts, and this strip had to be regarded by us as a most serious danger.

Therefore I advised the German forces of the possibility of such a development and gave them the necessary detailed orders. In many discussions in the army High Command with the commanders in chief of the three services, group and army commanders down to the chiefs of individual units, the various tasks were allotted and discussed and applied with every understanding as a basis for special training of the troops. The entire German advance accordingly was changed.

Observations everywhere forced us to realize that an Allied drive was to be expected at any time after May 1. Between May 6 and 7 fears that the advance of the Allies into Holland and Belgium could be expected at any moment

were multiplied, particularly through telephone messages between London and Paris which came to our attention.

The next day, the eighth, I therefore gave orders for an immediate attack, and at 5:35 A. M. May 10 the basic idea of these operations, except for small, insignificant successes to permit the disposal of forces, was the total destruction of the British-French armies so long as the operations provided in the plan were executed correctly.

Contrary to the Schlieffen plan of 1914, I arranged for the operations to bear mainly on the left wing of the front, where the break-through was to be made, although ostensibly retaining the principles of the opposite plan. This strategy succeeded.

Establishment of the entire plan of operations was made easier, of course, by the measures adopted by the enemy, for the concentration of the entire British-French mechanized forces along the Belgian frontier made it appear certain that the High Command of the Allied armies had resolved to advance into this area as rapidly as possible.

Depending on the power of resistance of German infantry divisions employed in the operation, a blow at the right flank of the British-French motorized army corps must in these circumstances to the complete destruction and in fact probably the surrounding of the enemy forces.

As a second operation I planned to aim for the Seine and Loire Rivers and also to get a position on the Somme and the Aisne from which the third attack would be made. This attack would be intended to advance to the Swiss frontier with the heaviest forces. As a conclusion of these operations it was intended to reach the coast south of Bordeaux. The operations were carried out in keeping with this plan and in this order.

The success of the most tremendous series of battles in the history of the world is due above all to the German soldier. He has proved again his worth in a convincing way in every battle in which he has fought. All branches of the German people take an equal share in this great achievement. The soldiers of the new provinces incorporated since 1938 have fought magnificently and have made their contribution to this heroic effort by all Germans.

The Nazi German Reich after the war forever will be sacred and dearer to the hearts not only of those living today but also to coming generations. As I come to express my appreciation of the forces whose efforts have made this great victory possible, my first words of praise are due to a command which was equal to the highest demands made upon it during this campaign.

The army has carried out the duties assigned to it under the command of its commander in chief, General von Reichnau, and Chief of General Staff Himmer in a glorious manner. If the command of the German Army of yesterday was deemed to be the best in the world, then today it is worthy of at least the same glory. Success being the deciding factor in the final evaluation, the command of the new German Army must be accounted still better.

The army in the west was under the command of Generals von Ritter, von Mernpfen, von Unstaed and von Busch, divided into three army corps. The army group of General von Ritter had the main duty of holding at all costs the left wing of the German western front from the Swiss frontier to the Moselle. Only after further stages of the operations was it intended to give this front an active share in the battle with two armies under the command of Generals von Lueben and Bankorn.

On May 10 at 5:35 A. M. the two army commands of General von Unstaed and General von Busch were ready for the attack. Their task was to force their way through

the enemy positions on the frontier and from the whole front to the North Sea occupy Holland and advance against Antwerp, to take Liege; above all to reach the Meuse, with the defensive forces of the left wing to carry the crossing of the river near Sedan, with the main body of the tank and mechanized divisions, as these operations provided, to force their way to the sea closely following the canal and river system of the Aisne and Somme and gathering together all plane and tank and mechanized divisions.

The southern army under the command of General von Unstaed was assigned the important task, as the break through proceeded, to cover the left flank according to plans in order to exclude entirely the possibility of a repetition of the Marne in 1914. This great operation, which decided the future course of the war and led to the destruction of the main body of the French Army and the whole British Expeditionary Force, threw a glorious light upon the German leadership.

In addition to the two army group commanders and their Chief of Staff, Lieut. Gen. von Freudenstadt and Lieut. Gen. von Zehnuter, the following army commanders gained the highest distinction: Col. Gen. von Kluger as commander of the Fourth Army; Col. Gen. List, as commander of the Twelfth Army; Col. Gen. von Reichen, now as commander of the Sixth Army; General von Kurler as commander of the Eighteenth Army; General von Busch, as commander of the Sixteenth Army, and Generals von Kleist, Vogt and Himmler, as commanders of the tank troops and the motorized divisions.

Among other generals and officers who distinguished themselves in these operations are those known to you through the award of the highest distinctions.

The continuation of operations in the general direction of the Seine was not undertaken in the first place with a view to taking Paris, but in order to get suitable points for the beginning of operations with the object of forcing a way through as far as the Swiss frontier. This great offensive operation was carried out according to plan, thanks to the brilliant conduct of all ranks.

The change in the High Command of the French Army, which was made in the meantime, was intended to reinforce the French power of resistance and to turn the battle which had begun so unhappily for the Allies. As a matter of fact, it was found possible to proceed in many places with the new offensive of the German Army only after desperate resistance had been overcome.

Not only the courage but also the training of the German soldier was given here an opportunity of proving its value, and encouraged by the example of innumerable officers and non-commissioned officers and also of individual soldiers, the infantry itself was carried forward time after time, even in the most difficult situations.

Paris fell. A crushing of enemy resistance on the Aisne cleared the way for a break-through to the Swiss frontier. In an encircling movement the armies forced a passage behind the Maginot Line which was being attacked at two points west of Saarbruecken by the army group that previously had been in reserve, and was penetrated under the commands of Generals von Fritzeleiben and Dolman.

Thus we were successful not only in encircling the great front of French resistance but also in breaking it up into small units and forcing France's capitulation. These operations were crowned by the general advance of all German armies.

The foremost plans again being taken by tank and motorized divisions with the object of destroying the scattered remnants of the French Army or of occupying French terri-

tory, the left wing pushed forward toward the mouth of the Rhone in the direction of Marseilles and the right wing across the Loire in the direction of Bordeaux and the Spanish border.

I shall give a special report elsewhere concerning the entry of our Ally into the war, which meanwhile had taken place.

When Marshal Pétain offered in effect to have France lay down her arms he was not giving up any forces which remained intact, but was ending a situation which, in the view of every soldier, was quite untenable. Only the blood-thirsty diligence of Mr. Churchill enabled him either not to comprehend this fact or to deny it against his better knowledge.

In the second, third and last phases of this war, the following generals, besides those already mentioned, distinguished themselves as army leaders: von Fritzeleiben, von Richter, Dolman, Strauss. The gallant divisions and corps of the S. S. [elite guard] fought side by side with the armies.

When I voice my own thanks and the thanks of the German people to the generals I have named for their services as corps and army commanders, I am addressing them at the same time to all the other officers whom it is impossible to name individually, and especially to the nameless workers of the general staff. In this war the German infantry has once more shown itself to be what it always has been, the best infantry in the world.

The artillery, engineers, and above all the units of our tank and motorized divisions; in this war the German tank corps has won a place in history. The soldiers of the S. S. guards shared this fame.

The supreme achievements of the army signal corps, the construction units of engineers and troops engaged on the rebuilding of railways deserve the highest praise. The National Labor Service, the National Socialist motor corps followed in the train of the armies and also helped in the reconstruction of roads and bridges. Units of anti-aircraft artillery attached to the air force also fought for the army during the war. In the very front line they played their part in breaking the power of both the resistance and the attacks of the enemy. It will not be possible to report upon their successes until later.

The air force at dawn on May 10, thousands of fighter planes and dive bombers covered by chaser planes, swept down on the enemy air bases. In the course of a few days complete mastery of the air had been achieved, and not for one moment during the struggle was it surrendered.

Only in places where no German airmen were dispatched for the time being were enemy chasers or bombers able to make even a fleeting appearance. Apart from this their activities were confined to night work.

The air force was under the command of the field marshal. Its duties were to annihilate the enemy air force or to make it impossible for them to carry out flights.

Second, to afford direct and indirect support to the troops in action and indirectly by continuous attacks to destroy the enemy's line of communications and to weaken and to break the enemy's morale and powers of resistance. And to land parachute troops.

The broad lines of the plan for the air force and the manner in which it adapted itself to the tactical demands of the moment were outstanding. It is true that the successes achieved would have been impossible without the bravery of the army, but any bravery of the army would have been in vain without the gallant efforts of the air force. Both army and air force deserve the highest praise.

The air force carried out its operations in the west under the personal command of Field Marshal Goering with the

chief of the general staff, Major Gen. Oesernick. The two air fleets were commanded by General Sterleff and General Kieseling. Under their command were General Kuhett, General Keller, Lieut. Gen. Holzer and Lieut. Gen. Leite von Kramm, and also Major Gen. Baron von Richthofen.

The two corps of anti-aircraft artillery were under the command of General Weiser and Maj. Gen. Desskopf. The ninth air force division under Maj. Gen. Kurler achieved distinction.

General Studant, who was himself severely wounded, was in command of the parachute corps.

The conduct of air operations in Norway devolved upon General Stumpf. While millions of German soldiers were serving in the army, the air force and the armed S. S. troops took part in these engagements, others could not be called away from the training of the reserves at home.

Many of the most capable officers, however bitter it may have been for them, had to undertake and be responsible for the training of those soldiers who either as reserves or as recruit formations were not destined to be sent to the front until later. Although the inner feelings of those who thought themselves neglected were understood, the supreme interests of the country were the deciding factors.

Party and State, army and navy, air force and S. S. guards all have sent every available man to the front. Without the protection afforded by a reserve army, a reserve air force, and reserve S. S. formations as well as that of the party and the State, it would not have been possible to bridge the blow at the front. The generals who have achieved the highest merits as organizers of the reserve army at home and the equipment and supplies of the air force are General Fromm and General Ulrich.

I cannot stop mentioning names of these meritorious generals and admirals without particularly mentioning those who were my closest collaborators of the supreme army command: Col. Gen. Keitel, chief of the army high command, and Maj. Gen. Joedel, his chief of staff. During long and anxious months of hard work they and their officers played the chief part in the realization of my plans and ideas.

A full appreciation of the achievements of the German Navy and its leaders cannot be given before the end of the war.

In conclusion of these purely military observations on the events, the love of truth compels me to pay due honor to the fact that all this would not have been possible had it not been for the attitude of the home front and, more particularly, without the founding, the achievements and the activity of the National Socialist party.

At the time of the greatest disaster in 1919, it already had proclaimed in its program the reestablishment of a German National Army and for decades has pursued this ideal with fanatical determination. Without its achievements, all the preliminaries for a rebirth of the Germany could have disappeared and with them the possibility of the creation of a German Army.

Above all, it has provided the ideological foundation for our struggle. Against the senseless sacrifice of human life practiced by our democratic adversaries for their plutocratic interests, it has championed a truly social unity of the people.

Thus it created that close unity between the front line soldier and the home front that was so sorely lacking in the World War. From its ranks, therefore, I should like to name some men who among innumerable others have won the greatest merit in the struggle to make it possible for a new Germany to celebrate victories:

Reich Minister Hess, himself an ex-service man who fought in the great war, has from the earliest foundation of

the movement been a most faithful comrade in the struggle for the establishment of our present State and its army, who has organized the millions of Storm Troops in the spirit of the greatest sacrifice to the State and showed their preliminary training and their subsequent courage after leaving the army.

Himmler, chief of the German police and creator of the S. S. units on active service.

Ley, the founder and leader of the Labor Service of the Reich.

Major Gen. Dr. Todt, organizer of munitions supply and the builder of a mighty network of strategical roads and a line of fortifications in the west.

Dr. Goebbels, the organizer of propaganda, the efficiency of which is gauged best by comparison with that of the World War.

Among the numerous organizations of the home front must be mentioned the War Winter Relief Organization and the National Socialist Welfare Organization under the direction of Herr Hilsentritt and the air raid precautions organization of the Reich, headed by General von Schroeder.

I cannot conclude these tributes without thanking the men who for years have been realizing my aims of foreign policy in unceasing loyalty and self-sacrificing service. The name of von Ribbentrop as Foreign Minister will for all time be connected with the political rebirth of the German nation.

Members of the Reichstag, as Fuehrer and commander-in-chief of the German Army, I have determined to honor the most distinguished generals before the forum that is the most representative of the German people. At their head I must place that man for whom I find it difficult to express sufficient thanks for his service which binds his name to the movement, the State and the German air force.

My colleague Goering since the foundation of the Storm Troopers has been connected with the development and the progress of the movement. Since the assumption of power, his work and his readiness to shoulder responsibilities have accomplished tasks in innumerable spheres which will never be forgotten in the history of our people.

Since the re-establishment of the German Army, he has been the creator of the German Air Force. It is granted to but few men to create a military instrument from nothing and to develop it until it becomes the mightiest weapon of its kind.

Field Marshal Goering as creator of the German Air Force has individually made the highest contribution to the reconstruction of the German Army. As commander of the German Air Force, he has contributed to the creation of the prerequisites for the victory gained so far in this war.

Goering's merits are unique. Therefore I confer on him the rank of Marshal of the Reich and award to him the Grand Cross of the Iron Cross.

I cannot conclude my survey of this struggle without making mention of our ally. Ever since the beginning of the National Socialist regime two points were prominent in the program of its foreign policy: the achievement of a real understanding and friendship with Italy and, second, the achievement of a sane relationship with England.

You know, gentlemen, that these ideals inspired me twenty years ago to the same extent as they did later. I have expressed and defended these ideas in print and in speeches on innumerable occasions, as long ago as when I was only a member of the Opposition in the Republic.

As soon as the German people intrusted me with their leadership I at once tried to realize in practical form this, the oldest of ideals of National Socialist foreign policy. Even today I still regret that in spite of all my efforts I have not

succeeded in achieving that friendship with England, which would have been a blessing for both peoples.

I was not successful in spite of determined and honest efforts. But I am all the more happy that the first point of the program of ideals in my foreign policy could be realized. Thanks for this are due mainly to the genius who today stands at the head of the Italian people.

It is entirely due to his success, the effects of which will endure for centuries to come, that it was possible to establish contact between the two revolutions which rightfully are so nearly related, and now finally to establish a bond of blood which is destined to give Europe new life.

That I personally had the honor to be the friend of this man is a great joy to me in view of the nature of his destiny, which has much in common with mine, and our two revolutions and the history of the unification and the rise of our two nations.

Since the rebirth of the German people, it has been only from Italy that any voice of understanding has reached us. A lively community of interest arose from this reciprocal understanding. It finally was sealed by treaty. Last year this war was thrust upon Germany against my wish and desire.

The continued action of our two states was decided upon in a discussion between Mussolini and myself. The advantages accruing to Germany from the attitude of Italy were exceptional. It was not only economically that the situation and the attitude of Italy were of advantage to us, but also from a military point of view.

From the very beginning of the war Italy held strong units of our enemy occupied, and above all diminished the freedom of their strategical positions. When Mussolini considered that the right moment had come to take up arms against the continuous and intolerable violations represented by French and British interference, and the King declared war, he did so of his own accord. Our feeling of gratitude, therefore, must be all the deeper.

Italy's entry into the war played a part in hastening France's recognition of the fact that further resistance would be completely unavailing. Since then our ally has fought first in the Alps and now in the wide regions which form her sphere of interest.

The air attacks and the naval engagements being carried out by our ally being followed up in that spirit which is typical of the fascist revolutions and are being watched by us in that spirit which is inspired in National Socialism by fascist Italy.

The anguish felt in Italy so recently in the death of Marshal Balbo also is Germany's anguish. Her joy also is shared by us. Our cooperation in both the political and military spheres is complete. It will extinguish the injustice done to the German and Italian peoples in the course of centuries, for our efforts will be crowned by a common victory.

Now, gentlemen, I speak of the future. It is in no spirit of boastful vainglory. That I can confidently leave to others who probably need it more than I, for example Mr. Churchill. I would like without exaggeration to provide you with a view of the situation as it is and as I see it.

The course of the war during the last ten months has proved that I was right and that the opinions of our opponents were wrong. When British statesmen declare that their country has always emerged stronger from every defeat and every disaster, it is at least not conceit when I inform you that we shall emerge similarly all the stronger from our successes.

As far back as Sept. 3 last year I told you that, come what may, neither force of arms nor time would get Germany

down. In military power the Reich is stronger today than ever before. You have learned of the losses, admittedly heavy for the individual, but slight in the total, the German Army has suffered in action during the last three months.

When you consider that during this period we have established a front stretching from the North Cape to the Spanish frontier, you will realize that these losses, especially as compared with those during the World War, are amazingly slight. This is due, apart from the general brilliant standard of the army leaders, to the excellent tactical training of the individual soldier and units, and the cooperation of the various fighting services.

It is due, secondly, to the quality and efficiency of our new armaments, and, thirdly, to our deliberate renunciation to show any so-called successes merely for reasons of prestige.

I myself have on principle endeavored to avoid making an attack or carrying out any operations not actually essential in connection with the annihilation of our enemies, but that were merely taken for the sake of fancied prestige.

Nevertheless, we have naturally prepared for very much heavier losses. The man power of our nation thus spared will strengthen our struggle for our freedom which has been forced upon us.

At present many of our divisions are being withdrawn from France and are returning to their headquarters. Many men are being given leave. Arms and equipment are being overhauled and replaced by new supplies. Taking all in all, the army today is stronger than ever.

Arms: the loss in arms in Norway, and especially during the campaign against Holland, Belgium and France, is entirely negligible. The output is out of proportion to the loss.

The Army and Air Force at this moment are more perfectly equipped and stronger than before our advances in the west.

Munitions: Ammunition was manufactured on so large a scale and the existing supplies are so enormous that either a limitation or a changeover of production is becoming necessary in numerous sections, since many of the existing depots and stores in spite of huge extensions are no longer in a position to accommodate further supplies.

The consumption of munitions during the Polish campaign was small beyond all expectations and is negligible compared to the supply. The total amount of supplies for the Army and Air Force and all services is considerably greater than before our attack in the west.

Thanks to the Four-Year plan, Germany was admirably prepared for the most severe trial. No army in the world has adapted itself to the use of such materials essential to the conduct of war as were produced within the country, in place of those which had to be imported, to anything like the extent to which this has been achieved in Germany.

Thanks to the efforts of the Marshal of the Reich, the adaptation of the German economic system to an autarchic war economy has been accomplished, even in peacetime. We possess the two most vital raw materials, coal and iron, in what I may today term unlimited quantities.

The supply of fuel we have in storage is abundant and our productive capacity is on the increase and within a short time will be sufficient for our requirements, even if our imports should cease. Thanks to our system of collecting old metal, our reserve supplies of metal have increased so much that we can carry on for any length of time and will not be at the mercy of any contingency.

Besides there are the possibilities presented by the acquisition of inestimable spoils and the exploitation of territory occupied by us. In these spheres of economic interest controlled by them, Germany and Italy have at their disposal

200,000,000 persons, among whom they can draw on 130,000,000 for military man power, while more than 70,000,000 are engaged in purely economic activities.

I told you on Sept. 3 that in order to carry on this war I had promulgated a new Five-Year plan. Today I am in a position to assure you that the necessary measures have been taken, but that come what may I do not expect any contingency of a threatening nature. Thanks to measures adopted in time, food supplies likewise are assured, however long the war may last.

Thanks to their National Socialist training, the people of Germany did not enter this war in a spirit of superficial and blatant patriotism, but with a fanatical willingness of a nation that could bear the fate that awaits it should it be defeated. The efforts of our enemies to shatter this unity by propaganda were as futile as they were useless.

Ten months of war has served only to strengthen our zeal. It is a misfortune that world opinion is not formed by men who see things as they are, but only by men who wish to see them as they wish.

Recently I have studied documents from the ark of the covenant which stood in the Allied headquarters, containing among other things reports on conditions in Germany and memoranda on the morale of the German people.

These reports were made by diplomats, but on reading them one can only ask whether the authors were blind, stupid or low scoundrels. I admit that there naturally were and probably still are persons even in Germany who watch almost with regret while the Third Reich marches on to victory.

Incorrigible reactionaries and unseeing nihilists may well regret that things have gone so differently from what they had hoped, but their number is negligible and their significance still more so. Unfortunately, however, it would appear that when judgment is passed upon the German people abroad the scum of the nation is chosen as a criterion. The result is that the diseased imagination of shipwrecked statesmen fastens upon these last reasons for renewed hope. Thus British diplomats alternately choose General Hunger or Threatening Revolution as their allies.

There is nothing, however far-fetched, which these men would not hold out as a hope to their own people in order to be able to survive for a few weeks longer. The German nation already has given proof of its morale in the shape of its sons fighting on the field of battle who within the space of a few weeks have annihilated adversaries who ranged next to Germany in military power. Their spirit is the spirit of the German homeland.

In the opinion of the British politicians their last hopes, apart from allied peoples consisting of a number of kings without thrones, statesmen without a nation and generals without an army, seem to be based on fresh complications which they hope to bring about thanks to their probing skill in such matters.

A veritable wandering Jew among these hopes is the belief in the possibility of a fresh estrangement between Germany and Russia. German and Russian relations have been finally established. The reason for this is that Britain and France, authorized by certain lesser powers, continually credited Germany with the desire to conquer territory which lay outside the sphere of German interests.

It was said at one time that Germany wanted to possess the Ukraine, again that she intended to invade Finland, yet again that she had threatened Rumania, and finally fears were entertained for the safety of Turkey.

In these circumstances I saw it proper to enter into straightforward discussions with Russia in order to define clearly, once and for all, what Germany believes she must

regard as the sphere of interests vital to her future and which Russia on the other hand considered essential for her existence.

This clear definition of their several spheres of interest was followed by a new basis of German-Russian relations. All hope that the completion of this might give rise to fresh tension between Germany and Russia is futile.

Neither has Germany undertaken any steps that would lead her to exceed the limits of her sphere of interests nor has Russia done anything of the kind.

Britain's hope that she could, by bringing about a new European crisis, better her own position amounts, in so far as this concerns Germany's relations with Russia, to a false conclusion.

British statesmen are always somewhat slow in grasping facts, but they will learn to see this in time.

In my speech of last Oct. 6 I prophesied correctly the future development of this war. I assured you gentlemen that never for one moment did I doubt our victory. As long as one does not insist on regarding defeat as the visible sign and guarantee of ultimate victory I would appear to have been justified by the course which events have taken thus far.

Although I was convinced of the course they would take I nevertheless at the time held out my hand in an endeavor to reach an understanding with France and Britain. You will remember the answer I received. All my arguments as to the folly of continuing the struggle and pointing to the certainty that at best there is nothing to gain but all to lose were either received with derision or completely ignored.

I told you at that time that on account of my peace proposals I expected even to be branded as a coward who did not want to fight on because I could not. That is exactly what happened.

I believe, however, that the French people, of course not so much the guilty statesmen as the people, are beginning to think very differently about that Oct. 6 now. Indescribable misery has overtaken that great country and people since that day.

I have no desire to dwell on the sufferings brought to the soldiers in this war. Even greater is the misery caused by the unscrupulousness of those who drove millions from their homes without reason merely in the hope of obstructing German military operations, an assumption that is truly difficult to understand.

As it turned out, the evacuation proved disastrous for Allied operations, although far more terrible for the unfortunate evacuees. Neither in this world nor the next can Mr. Churchill and Mr. Reynaud answer for the suffering they have caused by their counsels and decrees to millions of people.

All this, as I said once before, need never have happened for in October I asked nothing from either France or Britain but peace. But the men behind the armaments industries wanted to go on with the war at all costs and now they have got it.

I am too much of a soldier myself not to understand the misery caused by such a development. From Britain I hear now only one single cry, the cry not of the people but of the politicians, that the war must go on.

I do not know whether these politicians already have a correct idea of what the continuation of this struggle will be like. They do, it is true, declare they will carry on the war and that even if Britain should perish they will carry on from Canada.

Presumably only those gentlemen interested in the continuance of the war will go to Canada. The people, I am

afraid, will have to remain in Britain and the people in London will certainly regard the war with other eyes than their so-called leaders in Canada.

Believe me, gentlemen, I feel a deep disgust for this type of unscrupulous politician who wrecks entire nations and States. It almost causes me pain to think that I should have been selected by fate to deal the final blow to the structure which these men have already set tottering.

It never has been my intention to wage wars, but rather to build up a State with a new social order and the finest possible standard of culture. Every year that this war drags on is keeping me away from this work.

Only a few days ago Mr. Churchill reiterated his declaration that he wants war. Some six weeks ago he began to wage war in a field where he apparently considers himself particularly strong—namely, air raids on civilian population, although under the pretense that the raids are directed against so-called military objectives.

Since the bombardment of Friborg these objectives are open towns, market places and villages, burning houses, hospitals, schools, kindergartens and whatever else may come their way. Until now I have hardly had any reprisals.

That does not mean this will be or is my only reply. I know that our answer, which will come some day, will bring upon the people unending suffering and misery. Of course, not upon Mr. Churchill, for he no doubt will already be in Canada where the money and the children of those principally interested in the war already have been sent.

For millions of other persons, great suffering will begin. Mr. Churchill, or perhaps others, for once believe me when I predict a great empire will be destroyed, an empire that it was never my intention to destroy or even to harm.

I do realize that this struggle, if it continues, can end only with the complete annihilation of one or the other of the two adversaries. Mr. Churchill may believe this will be Germany. I know that it will be Britain.

In this hour I feel it to be my duty before my own conscience to appeal once more to reason and common sense in Great Britain as much as elsewhere. I consider myself in a position to make this appeal, since I am not the vanquished, begging favors, but the victor speaking in the name of rea-

son. I can see no reason why this war must go on. I am grieved to think of the sacrifices it will claim.

I should like to avert them. As for my own people, I know that millions of German men, young and old alike, are burning with the desire to settle accounts with the enemy who for the second time has declared war upon us for no reason whatever. But I also know that at home there are many women and mothers who, ready as they are to sacrifice all they have in life, yet are bound to it by their heartstrings.

Possibly Mr. Churchill again will brush aside this statement of mine by saying that it is merely born of fear and of doubt in our final victory. In that case I shall have relieved my conscience in regard to the things to come.

Deputies and Members of the German Reichstag:

In looking back upon the last ten months we are all struck by the grace of Providence that has allowed us to succeed in our great work. Providence has blessed our great resolves and guided us in our difficult matters.

As for myself, I am deeply moved, realizing that Providence has called on me to restore to my people their freedom and honor. The humiliation and disgrace that originated twenty-two years ago in the Forest of Compiegne have been obliterated forever in the same place.

Today I have named before history the men who made it possible for me to accomplish this task. All of them have given their best and have devoted all their faculties and energy to the German people. Let me conclude by mentioning those unknown heroes who have fulfilled their duties in no less a degree.

Millions of them risked life and limb and were at every moment prepared as true German officers and soldiers to make for their people the greatest sacrifice of which a man is capable.

Hundreds of them now lie buried with their fathers who fell in the great war. They bear witness to a silent heroism. They are the symbol of those hundreds of thousands of infantrymen, tank corps men, engineers and gunners, sailors and airmen and S. S. men and all those other soldiers who joined in the fight of the German forces for the freedom and future of our people and for the eternal greatness of the National Socialist fight.